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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Fifth and sixth periodic reports of States parties due in 2013

Armenia*

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INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth and sixth Report of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as "the Report"), submitted in compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and prepared in line with the guidelines on preparation of reports, particularly the document No. HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6 adopted on 3 June 2009. Report covers information on implementation of the provisions of the Convention and addresses the Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning the Republic of Armenia, which were adopted by the document of the Committee No. CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1 of 2 February 2009.

2. An interagency Commission was established by the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No 75-A of 8 February 2012 with a view to preparing this Report. The representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the representatives of the Police, the National Commission on Television and Radio, the Judicial Department and the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia were included in the composition of the Commission. The draft Report was discussed with the interested non-governmental organisations as well. The suggestions and observations of the latter were taken into consideration while preparing the final version of the Report (point 38 of the Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).

Article 1

3. The state guarantees of human and citizen's rights and freedoms are prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

All human beings shall be equal before the law. Discrimination based on sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, ideology, political or other views, membership to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited (Article 14.1).

Several dozens of effective laws were brought into compliance with the fundamental law following the reforms made to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia in 2005.

As regards points 18, 19 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, a Women's Council adjunct to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as "the Council") currently operates in Armenia the primary objective of which is to assist the implementation of political decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia aimed at anchoring of the gender equality at all levels of management, within the whole territory of the Republic, as well as within all areas of the social and economic life (Rules of Procedure of the Council of 1 March 2012 approved by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia).

The proposal on transforming the Council into a national mechanism for the implementation of the gender policy in the Republic of Armenia is currently under consideration.

In particular, by request of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and by the financing of the United Nations Children's Fund Office in Yerevan, the analysis on "National and institutional mechanisms for gender equality" was prepared by experts of the Republic of Armenia which should serve as a basis for identification of the model of the national mechanism.

As regards the activity of the Office of the Human Rights Defender, it should be mentioned that the Office employs an Adviser to the Defender on women's issues.

Meanwhile, the Decision on "The Procedure for monitoring the state policy programmes on ensuring gender equality and information exchange" was submitted for the approval of the Government of the Republic of Armenia with a view to ensuring the comprehensive accountability of the Government in the process of achieving gender equality and implementing of the Convention.

4. On implementation of points 12 and 13 of the Concluding observations of the Committee:

Where in previous years one of the state policy objectives in Armenia was the improvement of women's status and enhancement of their role in the society, in recent years the emphases were changed focusing on the ideology of equality of rights and opportunities for women and men, which was reflected in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men". The Law was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 20 May 2013 by 108 affirmative votes.

The main objective of the Law is to ensure equality between women and men in all areas, provide legal protection against discrimination and support the formation of a civil society in this field.

Before the adoption of the draft Law on 19 January 2013 parliamentary hearings were held in the National Assembly with the involvement of deputies, members of the Government, the Human Rights Defender, the representatives from non-governmental organisations and a number of international agencies.

5. Regarding implementation of point 41 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that in the last years the Republic of Armenia has acceded to a number of new documents in the field of non-discrimination, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified on 17 May 2010, entered into force on 22 October) and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ratified on 24 January 2011). We would also like to inform that the Initial Periodic Reports of the Republic of Armenia on implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned Conventions were submitted to the relevant Committees.

As regards the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Republic of Armenia signed it on 26 September 2013. The issue of ratification of the Convention is under consideration at interagency level.

Article 2

6. The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia prescribes equality before the law. Pursuant to part 1 of Article 18 of the Constitution, "Everyone shall — for the

protection of his or her rights and freedoms — have the right to effective judicial remedies, as well as effective legal remedies before other state bodies".

7. The principle of equality between women and men is widely reflected throughout the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. For instance, the civil legislation is based on issues of legal equality, inviolability of ownership, exercise of civil rights and reinstatement of violated rights through judicial procedure. The Labour Code prescribes the legal equality of parties to employment relations irrespective of their sex, race, national origin, language, origin, nationality, social status, religious belief, marital and family status, age, views or opinions, affiliation to parties, trade unions or non-governmental organisations, other circumstances not associated with the professional skills of an employee. Article 117 of the Code prescribes — as guarantees for women and employees taking care of a child — that an employment contract with a pregnant woman may not be rescinded during the overall period of pregnancy. The Family Code prescribes the legal equality of spouses in the family (Article 24), stating that each of the spouses is free in choosing the work, occupation, profession, and place of residence. Free mutual consent as well as marriageable age of men and women entering into marriage is necessary for concluding marriage.

8. Pursuant to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia (Article 143), the violation of legal equality, particularly direct or indirect violation of human and citizen's rights and freedoms on grounds of person's national origin, race, sex, language, religious belief, political or other views, social origin, property or other status — which has harmed a person's lawful interests — shall be considered to be a criminal offence thereby criminalising the infringement of Article 14.1 of the Constitution.

9. The effective operation of the judicial system is the important to ensure protection against discrimination. Pursuant to the Constitution and other legislative acts of the Republic of Armenia, citizens of the Republic of Armenia may apply to court to protect and reinstate the rights thereof without any discrimination based on sex. Pursuant to part 1 of Article 15 of the Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia, everyone shall be equal before the law and the court.

10. Pursuant to Article 92 of the Constitution, in the Republic of Armenia there shall be Courts of First Instance of General Jurisdiction, Courts of Appeal and the Court of Cassation, as well as, in cases provided for by law, specialised courts. The same Article provides for a new qualitative status for the Court of Cassation of the Republic of Armenia as the highest judicial instance of the Republic of Armenia (except for the matters of constitutional justice), which is called to ensure the uniform application of the law.

11. Pursuant to part 3 of Article 3 of the Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia, the Courts of First Instance shall be the Courts of General Jurisdiction and the Administrative Court. Pursuant to parts 4 and 5 of the same Article, the Courts of Appeal shall be the Criminal Court of Appeal, the Civil Court of Appeal and the Administrative Court of Appeal. The Administrative Court and the Administrative Court of Appeal shall be the specialised courts.

12. There is also a Constitutional Court operating in the Republic of Armenia, which is the highest body of the constitutional justice and ensures the supremacy of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia in the legal system of the Republic of

Armenia. Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, the Constitutional Court shall, among other powers, determine the compliance of laws, decisions of the National Assembly, decrees of the President of the Republic, decisions of the Government, Prime Minister, local self-government bodies with the Constitution, prior to ratification of an international treaty determine the compliance of commitments enshrined therein with the Constitution.

13. In 2009 and 2010, 46 out of 216 judges and in 2011, 48 out of 220 judges were women in the Courts of the Republic of Armenia.

Pursuant to data of 2012, by the average annual calculation, 47 out of 214 judges were women.

As of 27 November 2013, 45 out of 213 judges were women, 14 of which holding offices in the Courts of General Jurisdiction in marzes.

The 3 out of 13 members of the Council of Justice of the Republic of Armenia are women.

As prescribed by part 3 of Article 117 of the Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia, when drawing up the list of candidacies for judges, gender balance shall be considered. If the number of judges of either sex is less than twenty-five percent of the total number of judges, at least five places shall be secured in the list of candidates of that sex.

14. Currently, the judicial reforms in Armenia are in progress. The 2012-2016 Strategic Programme for Legal and Judicial Reforms has been adopted, which provides for wide-ranging activities covering judicial, penitentiary and criminal legislation, as well as all the laws related to the human rights of women.

15. As already mentioned, extrajudicial institutions, particularly the Office of the Human Rights Defender, are also engaged in the issues related to non-discrimination in Armenia. Pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On state budget for the year of 2014" the Government of the Republic of Armenia has increased the budget allocated for activities of the Defender by about AMD 25 million resulting in continuous operation of the Rapid Response Service and marz Offices of the Defender in Gavar, Kapan and Gyumri. Every year the Human Rights Defender publishes Annual Reports thoroughly addressing the activities carried out in the field of human rights. For instance, pursuant to the Report for the year 2013. the Office has rendered legal services to 6805 persons.

16. Pursuant to Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall, in accordance with the international treaties of the Republic of Armenia, have the right to apply — with regard to the protection of his or her rights and freedoms — to international bodies for protection of human rights and freedoms". Armenian citizens, including women, may apply to the European Court of Human Rights for the protection of the rights thereof. Armenia is represented in the European Court of Human Rights by a woman judge.

17. On 14 September 2006, Armenia has ratified the Optional Protocol of the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which enabled the citizens of the Republic of Armenia to address complaints to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Article 3

18. Based on the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, women enjoy all the rights equal to men, enabling them to make equal contribution to the economic, social and cultural spheres of the country.

Pursuant to Article 48 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia among the main tasks of the State in the economic, social and cultural spheres are:

(1) protect and patronise the family, motherhood and childhood;

(2) contribute to the employment of population and to the improvement of work conditions;

(3) foster housing construction and contribute to the improvement of housing conditions of each citizen;

(4) implement healthcare programmes for the population, contribute to the establishment of conditions for effective and affordable medical service;

(5) promote the participation of the youth in the political, economic and cultural life of the country, etc.

Thus, the State shall be obliged to undertake — to the extent possible — measures for the fulfilment of the tasks enshrined in this Article.

19. The Gender Policy Concept Paper was adopted by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 11 February 2010.

This Programme Document is a major contribution targeted at ensuring gender equality in the country, since it defines the primary directions of the state policy in relation to women and men and serves as a basis for the bodies of state authority and local self-government, as well as civil society institutions in developing clear-cut activities aimed at ensuring gender equality.

The objective of the Gender Policy is to create equal conditions, overcome all forms of discrimination based on sex, create equal opportunities and equal accessibility to economic resources for women and men on the labour market and employment sector, introduce a democratic political culture and establish tolerance in a dialogue on gender issues in the society through inclusion of a gender standard in all areas of life.

20. The Gender Policy Strategic Programme for 2011-2015 and Gender Policy Action Plan for 2011 (approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 20 May 2011) adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 20 May 2011 play a significant role in ensuring the implementation of the gender policy by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Activities included in the Gender Policy Strategic Programme are implemented in a number of directions:

(1) Strategy for gender policy implementation in the management sector and at decision-making level;

(2) Strategy for gender policy implementation in the social and economic area;

(3) Strategy for gender policy implementation in the area of healthcare;

(4) Strategy for gender policy implementation in the area of education;

(5) Strategy for gender policy implementation in the area of culture and public information;

(6) Strategy for gender policy implementation based on sex in the area of prevention of violence and human trafficking.

Within the framework of the approved actions, activities covering development and introduction of evaluation and monitoring indicators for dynamics of the gender situation were commenced. Activities are carried out targeted at reinforcing the uniform system including national and institutional mechanisms for development and implementation of the policy on gender equality, introducing a gender component in budgeting and planning processes (applying gender budgeting (gradual) in different phases of the budget cycle).

21. As regards point 11 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that a great number of campaigns were conducted during the reporting period aimed at coverage of main gender-related issues in target groups, as well as introduction of mechanisms for gender equality.

Training courses on gender policy are regularly conducted in the communities for the officials of local self-government bodies, as well as community servants.

A Methodological Guide on ensuring gender equality was introduced in the communities since 2014 with a view to ensuring gender equality and preventing discrimination against women at community level.

Within the framework of the Programme, which launched in April 2013 with the support of the UN Children's Fund, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs jointly with the National Institute of Labour and Social Research is implementing the programme "Assessment of capacities of standing committees on gender issues operating in Yerevan Municipality and marzes, and organisation of trainings", the objective of which is to reveal the organisational and professional abilities of members of committees, as well as to assess the individual abilities thereof (interpersonal communications, effective communication and negotiations skills, availability of leadership qualities). Based on the analysis of the data received, training modules were developed covering the following topics:

(1) Concepts of gender, gender socialisation, gender equality, gender balance.

(2) Essence of gender mainstreaming.

(3) Application and collection of indicators necessary for development of effective gender policy and strategic programmes.

(4) Identification of the gender component in the context of analysis of community issues.

(5) Strategic planning in effectively addressing marz and community related (gender) issues:

22. As regards point 42 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that pursuant to the established practice, the Concluding observations made by the UN treaty bodies are translated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and forwarded to the National Assembly of the

Republic of Armenia and to interested ministries and agencies. The Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were translated and disseminated also by different non-governmental organisations.

23. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On state pensions" was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 1 January 2011 (HO-243-N) which prescribes conditions and terms for granting pension to women under privileged conditions. With a view to ensuring a decent standard of life for elderly persons the State pursues a policy of consistent and continuous increase in the scale of pensions.

24. As regards point 40 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that despite the fact that Armenia has made a significant progress in its development efforts, the country was affected by the economic crisis since 2008, which was a serious obstacle in the fight against poverty.

Besides — by infringing the norms of international law — Turkey and Azerbaijan are imposing a blockade on Armenia for already a long period of time. As a consequence of the mentioned blockade, the country suffers losses amounting to tens of millions, in particular, the blockade has serious adverse effect on the growth of export of goods from Armenia, as well as reduction in prices of goods being imported. The studies conducted by the World Bank have shown that if Armenia was not under blockade, the country would have a significant growth in its Gross Domestic Product.

As regards point 39 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that Armenia was one of the first to work out the Beijing+20 National Review and to submit it to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in which the implementation of the provisions of the Beijing Declaration is reflected thoroughly. The English version of the Report is available at: http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/59/National_reviews/Armenia_review_Beijing20.pdf.

Information on implementation of the 5 Goal (improving maternal health) is available in Article 12 of the Report.

25. As regards points 36 and 37 of the Concluding observations of the Committee:

Vulnerable groups of women

Persons with disabilities

Main issues of persons with disabilities are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of people with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" (1993), as well as other legal acts.

Currently, the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On protection of rights of persons with disabilities and their social inclusion" has been drafted and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

26. The objective of the current programmes targeted at protection of rights of persons with disabilities is to provide them with opportunity to feel themselves as full members of the society.

27. The number of persons with disabilities including women/men/children in the Republic is presented in the Table below.

Number of persons with disabilities as of 1 January 2013

			From column 1 (city dwellers)	
	Total	*Of which women*	*Total*	*Of which women*
Persons with disabilities, total	186 384	87 419	130 238	63 454
Under 18 year of age	8 078	2 526	5 025	1 596
18 to 40 years old	27 424	8 523	17 767	5 647
40 to retirement age	97 897	50 333	66 164	35 112
of retirement age and higher	52 985	26 037	41 282	21 099

28. A great number of programmes are implemented aimed at ensuring accessible conditions for persons with disabilities and their integration into the society. Moreover, all the programmes are equally targeted at both women and men and exclude discrimination against any of the sexes. However, many issues still need to be addressed, and the issue of ensuring employment of persons with disabilities still remain one of the most challenging and key issues of the social sphere.

29. Employees of the Centre for vocational guidance and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities regularly visit houses of persons with disabilities, learn about their family, social, physiological state, identify the primary issues and provide relevant consultations to persons with disabilities and family members thereof.

Non-governmental organisations dealing with main issues of persons with disabilities — in co-operation with state agencies — implement programmes targeted at job placement, vocational education and guidance.

30. However, there exist a number of issues hindering full social integration into the society. There is a lack of a uniform rehabilitation system. Qualified specialists are not employed in rehabilitation services of persons with disabilities, since education institutions do not train specialists with a qualification of a recreation therapist. Education systems for retraining and training are not accessible for persons with disabilities. There are no regional centres for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Refugees

31. Armenia received first refugees back in 1988; these refugees were the ones who had escaped the massacres of the Armenians organised in the city of Sumgait, Azerbaijan on February 26-29.

On 10-13 January 1990, massacres of the Armenians were organised in Baku, resulting in complete removal of the Armenian population from Baku. Concurrently, Azerbaijan launched war against Nagorno-Karabakh, as a result of which the period covering 1990-1991 saw the depopulation of Kirovabad, Khanlar, Getashen, Shahumyan and other settlements. As a result, Armenia received more than 400.000 refugees exiled from Azerbaijan. Pursuant to the data provided by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, until the year of 2005 Armenia was heading the list of countries with the largest number of refugees per 1000 people.

32. From the first days of arrival of refugees, the Republic of Armenia has adopted the policy aimed at integrating refugees into the society, despite the social and economic difficulties prevailing in the country. The policy aimed at integrating refugees into the society has been yielding more tangible results since 2000, the year that marked the launch of activities of the Migration and Refugees Department adjacent to the Government of the Republic of Armenia — a separate institution dealing with issues of refugees, currently being the State Migration Service of the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

33. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On refugees and asylum" of 27 November 2008 provides for specific guarantees for women asylum seekers taking account of their specific situation and vulnerability. Part 6 of Article 51 of the Law, in particular, provides that interviews with women asylum seekers are, should they so wish, held by a woman worker of the authorised body where necessary with the help of a woman translator.

The special needs of women asylum seekers have also been taken into account in the legal acts of the Republic of Armenia regulating the conditions for receiving asylum seekers. In particular, pursuant to point 10 of the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On approving the procedure for placing asylum seekers in temporary reception centres and providing them with subsistence means" No 1440-N of 19 November 2009, when placing asylum seekers in temporary reception centres, consideration is given to the sex of the asylum seeker along with other circumstances. Pursuant to point 11 of the same Decision, individuals of different sex, who do not belong to the same family, may not be placed in the same room.

Similar guarantees are also contained in the legal act regulating relations pertaining to the placement of asylum seekers who have illegally entered the territory of the Republic of Armenia in special accommodation centres being set up at state border crossing points of the Republic of Armenia or in transit zones. Pursuant to point 3 of the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On defining the procedure for the functioning of special accommodation centres at the state border crossing points of the Republic of Armenia and transit zones and the procedure for keeping foreigners therein" No 783-N of 18 July 2013, each crossing point must be equipped with at least two rooms for persons of different sexes. Pursuant to point 8 of the same Decision, personal search of foreigners by a person of opposite sex shall be prohibited.

34. Women refugees, as a more vulnerable group, are paid a special attention in different programmes with various focuses implemented for refugees. This may be proved by the quotas provided for women refugees in the following programmes that have been recently implemented through the financial support of the UNHCR office in Armenia:

(1) Income Generation Programme, implemented by the Armenian Red Cross Society — the share of women was set to be 50%, but it has actually comprised 77%;

(2) Summer Camp Programme, implemented by the Armenian UN Association — the quota provided for girls has comprised 50%;

(3) Micro-financial programme, implemented by the Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Centre — the quota provided for women refugees comprised to 40%.

Furthermore, Programme on "Preventing and Responding to Sexual and Gender-based violence" has been developed and implemented by the Armenian Red Cross Society through the financial support of the UNHCR office in Armenia, which covers both refugee women and men with psychological disorders or those of victims of sexual and gender-based violence and excludes discrimination against any of the sexes. The Programme is targeted at providing them with psychological services and consultation with narrower specialists or referring them to other institutions if necessary, as well as ensuring medical, legal, social and other assistance.

35. The legislation regulating this sphere addresses main issues of refugees within the scope of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection in case of employment and unemployment of population". Refugees are included in the list of non-competitive groups (Article 20) and are entitled to additional guarantees of social protection regarding job placement. Employment programmes equally cover both women and men.

Minorities

36. The issue of ensuring rights of national minorities is constantly the centre of attention of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. Not yet being a member of the Council of Europe, Armenia signed in 1997 and ratified in 1998 the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In 2001, Armenia also signed and then ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Thus, in addition to the commitments assumed within the framework of the UN and the OSCE, the Republic of Armenia has also undertaken commitments arising from instruments having mandatory legal force within the framework of the CoE.

More than 20 nationalities reside along with the Armenians in the Republic of Armenia, 11 of them being national minorities. These minorities include the Assyrians, Greeks, Georgians, Jews, Yezidies, Kurds, Germans, Poles, Russians, Belarusians and the Ukrainians.

Yezidies comprise the majority among the national minorities — 40 620 people or 73 per cent of all non-foreign citizens of the Republic of Armenia. A considerable segment of them is distributed within marzes of the Republic of Armenia and lives dispersed, which, to some extent, complicates the exercise of collective rights to education, culture and identity of certain groups of national minorities. Of course, they all together and separately as ethnic communities and as individual citizens, enjoy the rights of national minorities.

37. The Government of the Republic of Armenia pays special attention to educational and cultural problems of ethnic communities residing within the territory of the Republic of Armenia and having no national statehood. Currently, these are the Yezidies, Assyrians and Kurds.

38. Since 2000, grants to address cultural and educational problems of national minorities have been annually allocated from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia amounting to AMD 10 million. Starting from 2012, this amount has been

doubled reaching 20 million. The money is used by non-governmental organisations for national minorities.

39. Upon the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 565-A of 22 April 2004, premises with a total territory of 800-square meter was allocated in downtown Yerevan for establishing a cultural centre for national minorities. In 2006, the premises were renovated, improved and furnished. The Centre, which opened in 2007, largely contributes to the promotion and development of cultural diversity of national minorities and to dissemination of information thereon. It affords all the opportunities to learn, use and develop languages of national minorities. Such opportunities are provided to all ethnic communities of the Republic of Armenia.

40. The legislation of the Republic of Armenia provides all national minorities residing within the territory of the Republic of Armenia with the opportunity of preserving their mother tongue. The main provisions of the language policy of the Republic of Armenia are prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On language", as well as by the State Programme of the Republic of Armenia concerning language policy. Both the Constitution and the Law state that the Republic of Armenia guarantees free use of languages of national minorities within its territory, including in the sphere of education. Article 41 of the Constitution in force defines, "Everyone shall have the right to preserve his or her national and ethnic identity. Persons belonging to national minorities shall have the right to preserve and develop their traditions, religion, language and culture". The current legislation of the Republic of Armenia neither provides for any restriction for the use of languages of national minorities nor envisages any legislative or practical measures aimed at harming or endangering the preservation or development of any language.

41. The co-operation among different ethnic communities within Armenia takes different forms. There are unions, associations of public organisations of national minorities. More than 50 self-organised non-governmental organisations of about 11 ethnic communities function within the Republic of Armenia, pursuing activities, among others, aimed at preserving and developing mother tongues.

Single mothers

42. In Armenia, single mothers do not constitute a separate social group, but are usually included in social programmes envisaged for vulnerable groups, since their social indicators, as a rule, meet the requirements for groups receiving additional support. The main concepts used in the legislation regulating this sphere are "non-competitive groups" (Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection in case of employment and unemployment of population"), and persons appeared in a difficult life situation (Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance").

Article 4

43. The legislation of the Republic of Armenia does not include any discrimination on the basis of sex. At the same time, though state authorities, each in the analyses regularly conducted in its sphere, present statistical data by women/men distribution, they do not, however, asses the legal practice from the perspective of impact on women and men.

In this regard, it should be mentioned that achieving *de facto* equality is a task requiring serious efforts both by state authorities and the civil society.

The Law "On provision of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men" — adopted in May 2013 — defines both main directions of the state policy aimed at ensuring gender equality, including gender equality guarantees within the state governance and public service, and clarifies the forms of gender discrimination.

44. As regards point 16 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that the adoption of temporary special measures is conditioned by the concern to improve the state of persons who are in need of a special social and legal assistance by the State. The Republic of Armenia adopts and consistently implements National Programmes considering gender equality issues as a priority.

The National Programme approved in 2011 addresses the period covering 2011-2015 and is aimed at solving issues of women in social, economic and other spheres. It is implemented in close co-operation with different sectors, including local self-government bodies, non-governmental organisations, etc.

Article 5

45. Points 20-21 of the Concluding observations of the Committee

As already referred to above, the Armenian legislation does not contain provisions restricting women's rights. However, the society is built on clear-cut ideas concerning the distribution of the roles of women and men in the family. It is also clear that gender stereotypes are usually formed at an early age, and the main tool for overcoming them is the implementation of educational programmes. The following educational programmes concerning gender equality issues have been implemented during the reporting period:

(a) for the purpose of raising gender sensitivity of civil servants, a component (module) for conveying gender-related knowledge has been included in the training programmes concerning "Human Rights" and "Key Gender Issues" approved by the Decision of the Civil Service Council of the Republic of Armenia N 567-N of 8 July 2008. Every year, about 200 civil servants take part in mandatory training courses;

(b) a system of indicators for assessing and monitoring the improvement of gender situation has been developed. Currently, its introduction is underway;

(c) components for gender analysis, assessment and monitoring have been introduced in the sector of emergency situations management for the first time, and within the framework of these components gender orientation and analysis, relevant measures (mechanisms) and resources will be introduced in the sector of disaster risks management at state, regional and community levels.

46. Armenian television and radio companies play a significant role in the process of overcoming gender stereotypes.

An independent regulatory body functions under the law for the purpose of ensuring the freedom, independence and diversity of the broadcast media.

Public and private television and radio companies operate within the Republic of Armenia.

When selecting a participant licensed during competitions held in 2010 for carrying out on-air broadcasting of television programmes of republican, metropolitan, regional coverage through the digital broadcasting network, the independent regulatory body takes into account the broadcasting policy programmes of private televisions, one of the components of which is the ability to promote pluralism on the basis of the business plan submitted by participants.

Broadcasting policy programmes of the existing television and radio companies aimed at ensuring gender equality include programmes covering widely (in case of radio — they are transmitted) events dedicated to the elimination of cases of violence by the use of different forms of violence against women, as well as cases of domestic violence against women, women journalists and women entrepreneurs. Such programmes are broadcast aimed at identifying and eliminating circumstances causing women and girls to engage in prostitution. The woman appears in news and journalistic programmes as a full member of the society. Events aimed at reintegrating women subjected to violence into the society, acquiring professional skills, as well as improving their standard of living, enhancing their involvement in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country and their role in the society are covered.

Article 22 ("Inadmissibility of the abuse of television and radio programmes") of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On television and radio" prohibits broadcasting of programmes containing propagation and worship of violence and cruelty, television and radio programmes of erotic nature, films containing horror and explicit violence, programmes with potential negative impact on health, mental and physical development, upbringing of minors. However, there are no mechanisms that would set standards for determining prohibited content, restriction of time limits. The President of the Republic of Armenia, emphasising the raised issues, requested the Public Council to take the issue under its auspices and hold consultations with the National Commission on Television and Radio, management of television companies, non-governmental organisations and intellectuals concerned with the issue and elaborate programmes for changing the broadcasting policy of both the Public and private television companies.

Pursuant to point 1 of Article 27 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On television and radio" adopted by the National Assembly on 10 June 2010, the Council of Public Television and Radio Company — the managing body of the Public Television Company — shall be composed of five members with at least one of them being a woman.

Pursuant to part (b) of Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On advertisement" existing in the field of television and radio, an advertisement which contains insulting expressions, comparisons and images relating to race, nationality, profession or social origin, age group or sex, language, religion and other convictions shall be prohibited.

47. Various organisations in Armenia conduct gender-related analysis of textbooks; currently, the task of the Government is to co-ordinate these studies, and link them to the context of human rights at schools.

48. As regards points 22 and 23 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform that on 17 June 2011 the Government of the Republic of

Armenia approved the National Programme against Gender-Based Violence, the 2011-2015 Strategy Programme against Gender-Based Violence and the 2011 Action Plan against Gender-Based Violence.

These instruments are implemented in three directions: prevention, protection and prosecution.

In the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, violence is regulated by a number of legal acts, in particular by the Criminal Code, Civil Code and Family Code. Pursuant to these legal acts, violence is not differentiated based on the sex of the victim. Any violence is criminally punishable irrespective of the sex. Crimes accompanied by violence, which may also be used in a family, are criminally punishable. It is worth mentioning that pursuant to certain articles violence committed against pregnant women and minors is deemed to be an aggravating circumstance.

49. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence has been translated and disseminated.

50. On the initiative of non-governmental organisations and with the participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, a draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On domestic violence" has also been elaborated and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia for consideration. However, taking into consideration the fact that legal and judicial reforms are currently underway in the country, the Government of the Republic of Armenia instructed the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia "to ensure the inclusion of different forms of domestic violence, as well as practical mechanisms for responding to and preventing them" while making amendments to a number of legal acts within the framework of the reform programme, as well as to discuss new measures with non-governmental organisations and include them in the current social assistance and protection programmes.

51. Taking into account the importance of the issue, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia implemented in 2012-2013 the Programme on "Improving the quality of service rendered to women became victims of domestic violence in Armenia".

Research has been conducted making it possible to establish the types, distribution, quality, efficiency and accessibility of services rendered to women became victims of domestic violence.

The research resulted in the singling out of a number of institutional, psychological and financial issues.

Currently, activities are undertaken to bring into action the legislative, structural and programme-related suggestions submitted after the research.

52. The Police of the Republic of Armenia focuses on taking actions for preventing and combating cases of violence and for excluding them; for that reason, on 16 February 2013, upon the Order of the Head of Police of the Republic of Armenia, for the first time, a separate subdivision, "Department for the protection of rights of minors and fight against domestic violence" was established, which deals with issues of domestic violence. This Department is the first of its kind among the member states of the CIS as well. The Department studies, analyses, registers cases

of violence against children and women and domestic violence and supports victims of violence.

Each case involving domestic violence, as well as violence against women is, in a due manner, registered with the regional Police Division. It is then followed by data collection and a separate registration at the Information Centre of the Police of the Republic of Armenia.

In 2012, 2026 cases of violence against women were registered, 625 of which were cases of domestic violence. During the same period, 190 cases of violence against minors were registered, 13 of which were cases of domestic violence.

During 9 months in 2013, 1449 cases of violence against women were registered, 432 of which were cases of domestic violence. During the same period, 199 cases of violence against minors were registered, 13 of which were cases of domestic violence.

Article 6

53. In response to points 24-27 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, we would like to inform you that during the reporting period extensive activities were undertaken within the framework of the fight against trafficking, with a number of measures implemented both for preventing trafficking and supporting and protecting victims of trafficking. As we have informed, upon the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No 861-A of 6 December 2007, Council on Human Exploitation (Trafficking) of the Republic of Armenia was established and has been functioning under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Minister of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia. For the purpose of arranging ongoing activities of the Council, a working group adjacent to it and under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia was also established by the same Decision.

The Council and the working group are composed of heads of all concerned ministries and agencies. Representatives of non-governmental organisations and international organisations that are represented in Armenia and are active in this sphere, extensively engage in activities of both the Council for Human Exploitation (Trafficking) and the working group adjacent to it. Due to joint efforts of the Council and the working group, the forth National Programme on Combating Human Trafficking in 2013-2015 was elaborated, which was approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 186-N of 28 February 2013.

On 25 March 2003, the Republic of Armenia ratified the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as well as the Protocol against the Smuggling Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

In January of 2008, the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was ratified. The Republic of Armenia has submitted its first summary report on the Convention to the Council of Europe.

In 2008, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the National Referral Procedure of Trafficked Persons. The latter defines such a system of co-operation

through which public administration bodies perform their duties related to the protection of rights of persons subjected to exploitation (trafficking).

In November of 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and the OSCE office in Yerevan signed Memorandum of Understanding on implementing the programme aimed at establishing an Anti-Trafficking Support and Resource Unit. It was completed in August of 2011. The main objective of the programme was to assist relevant institutions dealing with the fight against trafficking in the implementation of the 2010-2012 National Programme for Organising the Fight against Human Exploitation (Trafficking) in the Republic of Armenia, in particular in the elaboration of an effective mechanism for the protection of victims, and elaboration of a strategy aimed at protecting the needs and rights of victims.

On 18 November 2009, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making amendments and supplements to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia", providing for stricter punishments for trafficking crimes.

In 2009, discussions were held concerning the application of the National Referral Procedure of Trafficked Persons adopted in November 2008, and proposals on the outlined issues were submitted for the purpose of making relevant amendments to the referred Procedure. On 11 March 2010, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Decision No 230-A "On making amendments and a supplement to the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 1385-A of 20 November 2008".

On 26 November 2009, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Decision "On approving the procedure for differentiating expenses under subsidies provided on the basis of the civil law contract concluded for the purpose of rendering social and psychological rehabilitation services to victims of trafficking within the framework of financial resources envisaged by the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia for the given year" No 1358-N, thus regulating issues of state financing of services provided at restoration centres to victims of trafficking.

54. Since 2010, the State Programme for Social and Psychological Recovery of Victims of Trafficking has been implemented within the scope of which almost 20 women and children receive support each year.

Within the scope of the Programme the following types of aid are provided to victims of trafficking: accommodation, psychological assistance, legal consultation, support for engagement in social programmes, that is, programmes for state benefits, professional education and orientation, recruitment. Two persons have received apartments in the reporting period. Support has also been provided to children of female victims. It is important to state that the number of children subjected to trafficking is not large. The support process has been implemented in accordance with the provisions of the National Referral Procedure of Trafficked Persons.

Pursuant to the undertaken international commitments and the Schedule for the National Action Plan, the Procedure for awarding and providing lump-sum monetary compensation to trafficked persons has been developed and submitted to the Council on Trafficking.

55. Currently, the Police has drafted and put into circulation the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On identification of and support to persons subjected to trafficking or exploitation", which has been drafted based on the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings No. 197 and aims at much clearer regulation of the status of victims and the provision of further support thereto.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings signed in 2005, has drafted and put into circulation at inter-agency level, the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On approving the procedure for awarding and providing lump-sum monetary compensation to victims of trafficking in human beings".

56. Two shelters — short-term and long-term — operate in the Republic, where victims of trafficking are referred to for receiving support. Both shelters are located in Yerevan. The operation of one of these shelters is managed by the UMCOR non-governmental organisation, which co-operates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

57. It should be mentioned that rehabilitation centres operate for both minors and adult women engaged in prostitution in the Republic of Armenia.

The Police of the Republic of Armenia closely co-operates with non-governmental organisations that deal with women's issues, i.e. issues related to their reintegration and rehabilitation. Psychologists, social workers work with women engaged in prostitution, they are offered jobs, and provided with necessary services. Police officers of the Republic of Armenia carry out daily preventive works in this connection.

Article 7

58. The norm of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia with regard to voting and electing is effective and is directly and indirectly reflected in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

Gender sensitive quotas aimed at increasing women's representation in the legislative power were prescribed in the new Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted on 26 May 2011. In particular, Article 108 prescribes, "The number of representatives of each sex must not exceed the 80% of each integer group of five candidates (2-6, 2-11, 2-16 and subsequently till the end of the list) starting from the second number of the electoral list of a political party, of an alliance of political parties and of each of the parties included in an alliance for the elections to the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. At least 25 candidates shall be included in the electoral list presented by a political party, an alliance of a political party for the elections to the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. The number of candidates included in the electoral list of a political party may not exceed the three-fold of the number defined by this Code for the number of mandates of deputies of the National Assembly under the proportional electoral system. Persons not being members of other political party may also be included in the electoral list of a political party".

Based on the results of the parliamentary elections held on 6 May 2012 the number of women enrolled in the National Assembly of fifth convocation increased,

reaching 14. When representing the distribution by factions, "Republican Party of Armenia" Faction is composed of 69 deputies, of which 9 are women, "Prosperous Armenia" Faction is composed of 37 members, of which 2 women, "Armenian National Congress" Faction is composed of 7 deputies, of which 1 woman, "Rule of Law" Faction has 6 deputies, of which 1 woman, "Heritage" Faction is composed of 5 deputies, of which 1 woman, "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" Faction is composed of 5 deputies, none is a woman. By comparing the composition of the factions with those of the National Assembly of previous convocation, it should be noted that the number of women in "Republican Party of Armenia" Faction has obviously increased, reaching 13% as compared to 3.1% of the previous convocation. Moreover, one woman deputy representing the "Republican Party of Armenia" Faction is also the Vice-President of the National Assembly.

59. The Government of the Republic of Armenia has two women ministers who lead the Ministry of Diaspora and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia. Women deputy ministers are employed at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (two deputy ministers), as well as at the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Urban Development.

60. The establishment of non-governmental political associations and the procedure for their activities is prescribed by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On freedom of conscience and religious organisations" adopted in 1991, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On non-governmental organisations" adopted on 4 December 2001 and the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On political parties" adopted on 3 July 2003. The relations pertaining to the registration of associations is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the state registration of legal entities" adopted on 3 April 2001 and the above-mentioned Laws.

Pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On non-governmental organisations", a non-governmental organisation shall be a type of organisation — non-governmental association — which does not pursue a goal to gain profit and share it among members of the organisation (non-commercial), but unites natural persons, i.e. citizens of the Republic of Armenia, foreign citizens, stateless persons, based on common interests in the manner prescribed by law, to satisfy their non-religious spiritual or non-material needs, protect their rights and interests and that of others, ensure material and non-material support to the public, its separate groups, to implement other activities for public benefit. Pursuant to Article 8 of the Law, an organisation may be established as a result of being established by founders or reorganisation of an organisation(s) having any legal form of a non-governmental association. An organisation shall be regarded as established from the moment of its state registration in the manner prescribed by law. Currently, 4012 non-governmental organisations have been registered in the State Agency for Registration of Legal Entities of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, of which 1023 organisations are registered by women. Many of them were established immediately after the Republic of Armenia gained its independence and have a great contribution to the development of the civil society of the Republic of Armenia.

61. In May-July of 2013, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, jointly with the Institute of Labour and Social Research, organised meetings with members of commissions dealing with gender issues established with the support of UNFPA and currently functioning at marzpetarans in

all the marzes of the Republic, with a view to assessing their needs in terms of gender-related knowledge and skills. The results of the meetings have been summarised and currently, the Programme, with the support of the UNICEF, has launched the second phase, that is, development of appropriate modules and organisation of training courses.

Currently, mechanisms for preliminary identification of persons subjected to violence, and training modules for social workers (case managers) based thereon are being developed through the support of UNFPA.

62. On the initiative of the Women's Council headed by the Prime Minister, the "Best Women Entrepreneur" and "Best community for the solution of gender issues" Awards have been held for already three years. The Head of the Government grants certificates of honour to the winners of the competitions held in various categories. Communities declared as winners in the category of "Best community for the solution of gender issues" are selected pursuant to the methodological guidelines of criteria for evaluation of the performed activities, which have been developed by the Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia with the support of UNFPA. With the aim of encouraging entrepreneurial activities and pro-activeness of women, evaluating, promoting and supporting the achievements of women entrepreneurs at various branches of the economy, special prizes have also been awarded by international organisations, particularly by the USAID "Enterprise Development and Market Competitiveness Project", the OSCE, the International Finance Corporation and the Asian Development Bank. And the competitions announced in the categories "Best journalist for the coverage of gender-related problems", "Best TV report", "Best radio report" and "Best printed material" aim at covering interesting stories of successful businesswomen.

Article 8

63. The Republic of Armenia widely promotes the participation of women specialists in various international meetings and conferences, and the number of women employed in the international organisations operating in Armenia is greater than that of men.

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia is consistent in increasing the number of women diplomats. Thus, where in 2010, 21 male and 6 female students studied at the Diplomatic School, while in 2012, 14 male and 13 female students graduated from the School. Currently, three female ambassadors are employed in the diplomatic service of Armenia.

The Table attached to the Report specifies the number of women diplomats as of 2012.

Article 9

64. Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On citizenship of the Republic of Armenia" (hereinafter referred to as "the Law") of 28 November 1995 prescribes, "Marriage of a citizen of the Republic of Armenia to a foreign citizen shall not *per se* entail a change of citizenship, and a change of citizenship by one of the spouses shall not *per se* entail a change of citizenship of the other spouse.

The Law prescribes equal rights for women and men with regard to the choice of citizenship of their children. In particular, Article 16 of the Law prescribes, "Where

one of the parents acquires citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, while the other is a foreign citizen or a stateless person, their child shall acquire citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, if the written consent of parents is available, or the child resides in the Republic of Armenia and the consent of the parent holding citizenship of the Republic of Armenia is available".

The child of foreign citizens, who have acquired citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, acquires, irrespective of being the citizen of other State, citizenship of the Republic of Armenia by the procedure prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia on the basis of an application for getting a passport of the citizen of the Republic of Armenia.

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Law, where one of the parents has forfeited citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, while the other is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, their child shall forfeit citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, if the consent of the parents is available, or if the child resides outside the Republic of Armenia and the consent of the parent holding citizenship of the Republic of Armenia is available.

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Article 10

66. Article 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia prescribes, "Everyone shall have the right to education.

Basic general education shall be compulsory, except for cases provided for by law. A higher level of compulsory education may be established by law.

Secondary education in state educational institutions shall be free of charge.

Principles of autonomy of higher educational institutions shall be determined by law.

Procedure for the establishment and functioning of educational institutions shall be prescribed by law.

Every citizen shall have the right to free education on competitive basis in state higher and other vocational educational institutions, as prescribed by law. The State shall — in cases and as provided for by law — provide financial and other assistance to educational institutions implementing higher and other vocational educational programmes and to students thereof".

67. As regards the Concluding observations of the Committee referred to in points 30-31, it should be mentioned that the legislative framework of the Republic of Armenia ensures equal opportunities for education, however, at different levels of education there are drop-outs among learners. It should be mentioned that the number of learners of this category is not great. In particular, in the field of general education, learners aged 15 and 16 constitute a greater number in the group of pupils having dropped out of school, and the main reasons therefor are "the absence of wish" and "poor social and economic conditions". At the same time it should be stated that school drop-outs are more common among boys that have graduated from the ninth grade and are from socially disadvantaged and large families. This is due to the fact that 9 grade (basic) education is compulsory for everyone and it is enshrined in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education".

"Healthy lifestyle" course is taught at 8th-11th grades of general education schools, and in each grade 14 class hours are annually allocated for it. Teachers of the subject receive relevant trainings. The course contributes to awareness-raising among learners of a healthy lifestyle and basics of getting prepared for family life.

"Tolerance" programme is being implemented in the field of general education with the support of United Nations Development Programme. A manual for the teacher of the given subject has been developed for that purpose. The Programme teaches tolerance, co-operation to learners, promotes conflict resolution, etc.

68. As regards the academic performance, it should be mentioned that women (girls) are never behind men (boys) in their performance. Moreover, they demonstrate greater interest and responsibility for education. The correlation indicators for learners of general education schools come to prove this.

In recent years, the number of girls studying at high school has increased. After graduating from the basic school, more often boys leave school by various motives and continue education at secondary vocational education institutions or start working.

In the field of secondary vocational education, women among learners having left studies or dropped out comprise 25,6%, while this indicator with regard to higher education institutions comprise 26%. Certainly, learners studying on a paid basis make a greater number in these groups. More frequently, students are dropped out or leave studies as a result of unsatisfactory academic performance or for social conditions.

69. It is worth mentioning that in Armenia, at different levels of education, there is no discrimination based on sex in terms of enrolment of learners, and with this regard, actually, no enrolment problems exist. However, the analysis of some

indicators proves that among persons enrolled both in general education and professional education, men are more vulnerable and more exposed to the risk of being dropped out of educational system.

70. In recent years, in the field of higher professional education, higher enrolment ratio for women is observed in professions, such as economics, law, health care, pedagogy and arts. Although the prevalence in the number of women in the fields of pedagogy, arts and health care is traditional, however, women, nowadays, also prefer the fields of economics, applied mathematics and law. This is preconditioned by both high demand on the labour market for these professions and formation of new relations in the society, as well as by the need of equal participation of men and women in various spheres of social life.

Pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On higher education", management positions at higher education institutions is filled on a competitive basis in which both women and men equally participate.

Within the framework of the 2011 Action Plan provided for by the Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 the following activities have been carried out in the field of education: improving the qualification of teachers of general education schools with the aim of shaping their gender-specific mindset, transferring gender-related knowledge and increasing gender sensitivity. An introduction course on "Basics of gender-related knowledge" has been developed for teachers of general education schools that will be included in the training module for teachers of the subject "Social studies" from 2012. Raising the awareness of issues relating to the professional orientation of learners aimed at overcoming gender-based stereotypes, creating motivation among girls and boys for professions that are not traditional for them. In general education schools, "Educational Work at Schools; Professional Orientation Problems" support manual has been recommended for supervising teachers.

For the purpose of preventing gender-based violence, the 2011-2015 Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence provides for organisation of educational activities for learners at general education schools and professional education institutions regarding gender-based violence issues; educational events will also be organised for raising the awareness of teachers and professors of higher education institutions on gender-based violence issues.

Currently, substantial reforms are carried out in the field of education that are also aimed at democratisation of education, establishment and development of the civil society. In particular, the subject "Social Studies" is taught at general education schools, which also includes topics on legal equality of women and men, on the role thereof in the society. The subject helps learners modify stereotypes, as well as encourages them in becoming active citizens.

At the same time, pursuant to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On general education" (National Assembly, 10 of July 2009, HO-160-N) and the "state general education criteria" approved by the Decision No 439-N of 8 April 2010, the criteria and programmes for "Social Studies" and "Natural Science" subjects of the general education school have been amended that included criteria establishing gender equality and protection of women's rights, for example, at elementary school it is ensured in the programme of the subject "Me and the Surrounding World" and at middle and high schools — in the subject "Social Studies". With the support of the United Nations Development Programme Country Office, the syllabuses and

textbooks of the general education school have been revised from the standpoint of human rights, and based on the recommendations made, new subject criteria and programmes of the basic school have been simplified and approved by the Orders of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. This process aims at providing learners with comprehensive knowledge on interrelations between the society and an individual, upbringing a socially active person and a citizen carrying national and universal values, who is well aware of his or her rights and obligations, and respects democratic values.

In the field of pre-school education, the Programme on "Education of Parents" is implemented within the scope of which methodological assistance is provided to parents of children of pre-school age with the aim of organising the upbringing process of children within families correctly. The manuals designed for parents give them pedagogical and healthcare-related knowledge. The Programme also helps women and men acknowledge their role in the upbringing of children, realise their common responsibility, rights and obligations.

Flow of the number of people admitted to, attending and completed doctoral studies, 2007-2012

	Total						*of which women*					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Admitted to doctoral studies	371	382	273	275	368	373	157	140	52	110	160	142
including:												
in scientific institutions	145	99	95	65	52	55	68	32	28	4	13	14
of which in the form of on-site education	78	59	43	44	35	34	15	6	7	–	1	3
in higher education institutions	226	283	178	210	316	318	89	108	24	106	147	128
of which in the form of on-site education	110	157	95	133	138	140	7	15	13	26	21	19
Number of doctoral candidates	1 414	1 320	1 393	1 232	1 054	1 104	606	568	541	477	432	463
including:												
in scientific institutions	451	350	411	321	196	190	195	120	118	101	44	42
of which in the form of on-site education	246	155	27	221	123	125	47	11	12	10	4	5
in higher education institutions	963	970	982	911	858	914	411	448	423	376	388	421
of which in the form of on-site education	409	405	455	437	388	388	19	42	45	54	55	55
Completed doctoral studies	343	425	597	440	370	368	101	124	218	182	113	106
including:												
in scientific institutions	98	143	140	98	67	56	36	35	32	26	18	14
of which in the form of on-site education	56	85	43	29	40	38	7	7	5	1	5	5
in higher education institutions	245	282	457	342	303	312	65	89	186	156	95	92
of which in the form of on-site education	156	145	95	111	174	173	22	9	15	17	13	10

Number of post-doctoral research students by instruction system and by profession, 2007-2012

(a) total

	Total						*of which women*					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Physics and mathematics	–	1	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Biology	1	–	–	–	–	4	1	–	–	–	–	1
Geology	–	3	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Technical sciences	7	9	5	10	10	8	–	1	1	–	1	1
Agriculture	–	6	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Philology	–	1	4	2	–	2	–	1	3	1	–	–
Pedagogy	–	2	2	2	2	1	–	1	1	1	1	1
Medicine	45	48	41	37	25	24	7	14	14	14	9	9
History	–	–	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Veterinary	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Economics	4	–	–	–	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Law	1	–	–	–	2	1	1	–	–	–	1	–
Architecture	1	1	1	2	2	6	–	–	–	–	–	–
Psychology	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Political studies	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	**60**	**72**	**56**	**57**	**45**	**51**	**10**	**17**	**19**	**16**	**12**	**12**

Gross enrolment ratio of pupils in general elementary schools by sex, 2007-2012

%

	Total	*Girls*	*Boys*
2007	93.2	93.5	92.9
2008	95.5	96.2	94.9
2009	96.1	96.3	95.9
2010	96.8	97.4	96.4
2011	99.0	99.6	98.4
2012	95.2	96.0	94.5

Gross enrolment ratio of pupils in general basic schools by sex, 2007-2012

%

	Total	*Girls*	*Boys*
2007	95.9	96.0	95.9
2008	93.5	94.0	93.0
2009	92.1	92.7	91.6
2010	91.6	92.1	91.1
2011	91.8	92.2	91.5
2012	94.8	95.6	94.0

Gross enrolment ratio of pupils in general high schools by sex, 2007-2012

%

	Total	*Girls*	*Boys*
2007	82.9	88.7	77.4
2008	81.9	86.0	78.1
2009	83.9	88.6	79.4
2010	84.4	90.9	78.4
2011	72.8	79.5	66.5
2012	74.1	81.5	67.4

Gross enrolment ratio of pupils in general education schools by sex, 2007-2012

%

	Total	*Girls*	*Boys*
2007	89.2	90.4	88.2
2008	90.8	92.1	89.6
2009	90.2	91.7	88.9
2010	90.1	91.8	88.6
2011	86.3	88.5	84.4
2012	89.2	91.7	86.9

Article 11

71. Points 32-33 of the Concluding observations of the Committee

The commitments undertaken under the above-mentioned Article shall be regulated by the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia, in particular, by Articles 3, 4, 114, 141, 172, 173, 243, 258 of the Code which:

(1) prescribe the principles of the labour legislation (Article 3) — points (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f);

(2) prohibit the rescission of the employment contract on the initiative of the employer (Article 114) — point (a);

(3) prescribe incomplete working time (Article 141) — point (c);

(4) prescribe the periods for pregnancy and maternity leave, as well as periods for leave of employees having adopted a new born or appointed a guardian of a new born, periods for leave for taking care of a child under the age of three (Article 172, 173) — point (b);

(5) ensure the right of employees to safe work (Article 243) — point (f);

(6) protect motherhood (Article 258) — point (d).

Meanwhile, it should be mentioned that employment of the population is still a problem in the Republic. Moreover, the majority of the unemployed are women. Thus, as of 1 July 2012, the number of unemployed women comprised 73.4% of the total number of the unemployed, and 24.1% of the unemployed were young people.

Surveys also show that labouring jobs, where men are involved, are most demanded (see the Table attached).

Of course, this is a problem from perspectives of fulfilling the opportunity for free choice of profession afforded by the State, implementation of guarantees for employment and execution of rights to equal remuneration, social security and heath protection declared by the State.

72. Point 3 of part 1 of Article 3 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia prescribes legal equality of parties to employment relations as a main principle of the labour legislation, irrespective of their sex, race, national origin, language, origin, nationality and other issues.

Pursuant to part 2 of Article 178 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia, men and women shall be paid a salary of the same amount for the same or equivalent work.

73. Some amendments have been made to the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia during the past years, in particular, Article 221, which refers to gross violations of work discipline, has been repealed. At the same time, establishing exclusions and distinctions, which concern the nature of the given work or aimed at protection of persons in need of social and legal protection, shall not be considered discrimination.

74. The duration and procedures concerning pregnancy and maternity leave, as well as leave for taking care of a child, have remained unchanged. Employed women are granted a leave from 140 to 180 days (Article 172 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia). Leave for taking care of a child under the age of three is, at their wish, granted to one of the employed parents (Article 173 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia).

Unpaid leave for a period of two months is, at the request of the employee, granted to a husband of a woman on pregnancy and maternity leave, as well as a husband of a woman on leave for taking care of a child under the age of one (Article 176 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia).

75. The Articles of the Code regulating overtime work (Article 144), night work, shift, weekly uninterrupted rest are sensitive from the gender perspective. The above-mentioned Articles prescribe rights concerning fulfilment of family obligations of the employee (both women and men) taking care of a child. In this

regard, Article 258 (Maternity Protection) of the Code is an exception, which prohibits engaging pregnant women or women taking care of a child under the age of one in heavy, harmful, especially heavy and especially harmful works as prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

76. Since 2012, comprehensive reforms have been implemented in the field of state regulation of employment, particularly, in 2012, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the Employment Strategy for 2013-2018, and with a view to stipulating legal grounds for the new model of employment policy and providing for comprehensive and effective legislative framework for the main mechanisms for the implementation of priority goals of the Strategy, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On employment" was elaborated and adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 11 December 2013. Starting from 2014, apart from seven formerly existing active programmes, the following new state programmes for persons uncompetitive in the labour market (the priority in this group is also given to women, as well as to those with disabilities) are envisaged within the framework of the annual state employment programmes funded from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia:

(1) in case of being employed, a lump-sum compensation for acquiring necessary working skills and capacities;

(2) financial assistance and counselling with a view to carrying out entrepreneurial activities;

(3) financial assistance for making use of services rendered by non-state organisations co-operating with an authorised body;

(4) reimbursement of costs incurred for visiting employers to get a suitable job upon the motion of the authorised body;

(5) financial assistance and counselling to rural economy through the promotion of seasonal employment.

As the data provided by the Employment State Agency shows, the number of job seekers as of 31 December 2013 comprises 65.2 thousand people, 46.8 thousand of which are women, 15.7 thousand are young people. The number of unemployed comprises 85,9 % of those seeking a job or 56.0 thousand people. The number of unemployed women comprises 73,7% of those unemployed or 41.3 thousand people. The number of young unemployed comprises 23.4% of unemployed or 13.1 thousand people.

12659 job seekers were employed as of 31 December 2013, 7868 of which were women. Young people lacking work experience, women and especially those over 50 years of age, who lost their qualification due to a long-lasting unemployment have serious difficulties in finding a job and need to be enrolled in vocational training courses.

With a view to mitigating the mismatch between supply and demand, a vocational training for 990 unemployed women in computer accounting, tailoring, hairdressing, beautician and manicurist services, confectionery, baking, table decoration, cooking, etc. has been organised through the State Employment Agency.

Nearly 15234 unemployed have acquired the *right to receive unemployment benefits*, 10068 of which are women.

Instead of 216 persons planned to be involved in "*Partial salary compensation to employers in case they employ persons uncompetitive in the labour market*" programme, 241 persons have been involved, 156 of which are persons with disabilities and 128 are women.

Under "*Financial assistance to the unemployed and persons with disabilities for the state registration to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities*" programme, financial assistance has been provided mainly for being registered as an individual entrepreneur and, instead of 150 persons planned to be involved in the programme, 102 persons have been involved, 7 of which are persons with disabilities and 36 are women.

Instead of 1454 persons planned to be involved in "Organisation of vocational training" programme, 1500 persons have been involved. 990 persons of those involved in the programme are women.

Instead of 32 persons planned to be involved in "*Reimbursement of material costs of the unemployed in relation to the secondment to another place*" programme, 29 persons have been seconded to another place, 11 of which are women, 3 are persons with disabilities.

Instead of 300 persons planned to be involved in "*Organisation of internship of the unemployed who have a profession but have no work experience, and of unemployed job seekers with disabilities at the employer's office*" programme, 305 unemployed have taken internship, 5 of which are persons with disabilities, 198 are women.

Instead of 55 workplaces planned to be adjusted under "*Adjusting workplaces to the needs of unemployed job seekers with disabilities at the employer's office*" programme, 53 workplaces have been adjusted. 23 persons of those involved in the programme are women.

11 job fairs have been organised in the cities of Abovyan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Dilijan, Yerevan/3/, Jermuk, Aparan, Artashat and Kapan, 417 employers and nearly 16450 job seekers have participated in these fairs, 2083 current and 615 expected vacancies have been presented by the employers. Under the programme, 635 job seekers were employed.

Under "*Rehabilitation of hail-affected rural economies in Armavir Marz of the Republic of Armenia through the promotion of employment of persons being owners or lessees of agricultural lands or users thereof under the right of gratuitous use*" programme, 630, instead of 500 projects, have been implemented in hail-affected communities (for each family one project have been implemented), and 1411 persons including women have been involved therein.

Number of those involved in programmes of state regulation of employment

(Annual number, people)

		Total	*Women*	*Men*
	Total /those involved in active programmes/	3 644	1 462	771
1	"Payment of unemployment benefits" /monthly average number of beneficiaries/	10 090	8 942	1 148
2	"Financial assistance to the unemployed and persons with disabilities for the state registration to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities"	105	36	69
3	"Partial salary compensation to employers in case they employ uncompetitive persons in the labour market"	241	128	113
4	"Vocational training of unemployed persons, groups uncompetitive in the labour market and unemployed job seekers receiving long service and preferential pension" including	1 377	990	387
	Job seekers who are owners of agricultural lands	212	152	60
5	"Respecialisation of unemployed job seekers receiving long service preferential pension"	7	6	1
6	"Organisation of vocational training and restoration of working abilities of persons with disabilities having no pensionable service or having at least one-year pensionable service, who are unemployed and seeking a job"	116	70	46
7	"Reimbursement of material costs of the unemployed in relation to the secondment to another place"	29	11	18
8	"Organisation of internship of the unemployed who have a profession but have no work experience, and of unemployed job seekers with disabilities at the employer's office"	305	198	107
9	"Adjusting workplaces to the needs of unemployed job seekers with disabilities at the employer's office"	53	23	30
10	"Organisation of job fair"			16 450/11 fairs/
11	"Rehabilitation of hail-affected rural economies in Armavir Marz of the Republic of Armenia through the promotion of employment of persons being owners or lessees of agricultural lands or users thereof under the right of gratuitous use"			1 411
12	Those registered as job seekers found a job	12 659	7 868	4 791

77. On 26 May 2011, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On public service", which regulates the principles of and the procedure for the organisation of public service in the Republic of Armenia (Article 1). Public service includes state service (civil service, judicial service, diplomatic service, special services in the area of defence, national security, police, tax, customs, rescue service, state service in the National Assembly Staff, in the Prosecutor's Office), community service, state and community positions (part 1 of Article 3). One of the main principles of the public service is the legal equality of public servants before the law (part 1 of Article 3). One of the main rights of public servants is the right to receive equivalent remuneration for work (point 5 of Article 20). Each public servant is, without any discrimination, entitled to remuneration in the amount prescribed by the legislation (part 2 of Article 27).

Issues related to the remuneration for each state service are mainly regulated by the law on each service. Basic and supplementary salary for both state and community services is prescribed for a particular position, and no discrimination is made based on sex.

Distribution of civil servants by position groups and sex

Position group sex	*Highest positions*	*Chief positions*	*Leading positions*	*Junior positions*
Total	1.9%	43.6%	35%	19.5%
Men	90.2%	59.9%	42%	31.4%
Women	9.8%	40.1%	58%	68.6%

Moreover, civil servants hold positions in civil service on a competitive or non-competitive basis.

78. Within the framework of the reforms having been made in the Educational Complex of the Police of the Republic of Armenia since 2010, the quota has been removed, as a result of which the number of female police students now comprises about 30% in comparison to 5% of the past.

Article 12

79. Points 34-35 of the Concluding observations of the Committee

Legislation

Women, maternal and infant health care at state level has continually been and still remains among the priorities of the State and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia. Certain activities have been carried out aimed at improving the legislation to preserve and improve women's health and to ensure equal rights in the health care sector, particularly, in 2007-2012, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved a number of decisions on:

(1) "Approving the National Programme on improvement of reproductive health, strategy and timetable of actions for 2007-2015" in 2007;

(2) "Approving the National Strategy for child and adolescent health and development and the Action Plan for 2009-2015" in 2010;

(3) "Procedure for registration and issuance of birth, perinatal death and death medical certificates" which was approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 1156-N of 2011;

(4) Sanitary and epidemiological rules and norms "On prevention of in-patient infections in obstetrics and gynaecology hospitals (units) and prevention of anti-epidemic complex measures and organisation and implementation of anti-epidemic complex measures" SR 3.1.6-011-09 were approved in 2009;

(5) "Concept paper on enrichment of wheat flour with micro-elements and vitamins in the Republic of Armenia" which was approved by the Protocol Decision No 6 of the sitting of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 17 February 2011;

(6) the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On human reproductive health and

reproductive rights"" was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia in 2013;

(7) taking into account high mortality rate of women from cancer of reproductive organs, including breast cancer and cervical cancer in the structure of women's mortality and morbidity, as well as with a view to preventing these diseases and reducing mortality, the Protocol Decision "On approving the Concept Paper on prevention, early detection and treatment of common non-infectious diseases and the list of activities ensuring the execution of the Concept Paper" No 3 of the sitting of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 29 January 2010 was approved in 2010, within the framework of which the Decision of 2011 "On approving the National Strategy programmes and the timetable of measures against three diseases causing higher mortality — blood circulation system diseases (cardiovascular diseases), malignant neoplasms and diabetes" was approved;

(8) in 2011, relevant amendments were made by the Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 318-N and 748-N and since 2011 complex examination of health condition of boys aged 14-15 and girls aged 15, including examination of reproductive system, detection of pathologies and treatment, have been conducted, which serve as an essential guarantee for improving health of adolescents, becoming healthy parents as well as for preventing infertility;

(9) during the reporting period a number of regulations, strategies, programmes, decisions, particularly, the procedure for using assisted reproductive technologies, varieties of methods and medical practice aimed at improving reproductive health were approved by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia, which enables women to overcome the problem of infertility and implement one of the fundamental human rights to benefit of progress results;

(10) another progress result is the implementation by women of the right to benefit of induced medical termination of pregnancy; the method has been included in clinical guidelines "On organisation and provision of medical aid in case of induced termination of pregnancy" approved by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 957-A of 2010;

(11) the manual "On effective perinatal medical aid and care" for obstetrician-gynaecologists was approved and introduced in practical health care by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 1408-A of 20 July 2011 and a training was conducted for 100 service providers with a view to improving medical aid provided during pregnancy and childbirth.

The manual includes WHO recent evidence-based recommendations to manage pregnancy and childbirth, as well as those on evaluating the intrauterine state of the foetus and contemporary approaches to early detection of defects and prevention of complications, which contributed to the improvement of health care indicators;

(12) within the framework of co-operation with the European Office of World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia a training for 30 national teachers was conducted "On introduction of empirical medicine into the family planning services" and a manual for teachers was published by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 925-A of 16 May 2011;

(13) clinical guidelines for health care professionals "On the procedure of organisation and provision of medical aid to persons subjected to sexual violence" were approved and introduced into practical health care by the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia No 2344-A of 26 August 2013.

80. These reforms are mainly aimed at supporting socially vulnerable groups, improving quality and affordability of medical aid for women, reducing inequality and differences conditioned by urban and rural settlements, level of material well-being of the family, education level, etc.

81. Although the legislation is rather favourable in this sector, however, the analysis of women's situation prove the existence of some restrictions concerning issues of preservation of women's reproductive health, particularly, with regard to affordability of effective contraceptives and some medicine (necessary for medical termination of pregnancy), limited opportunity for both women and men to use assisted reproductive technology.

82. There is a wide network of health care organisations in the Republic of Armenia. Armenia is one of the unique countries which has health care institutions even in the smallest rural settlements.

In Armenia, there are 614 medical and obstetrical stations, 255 primary health care (Ambulatory/Polyclinic) organisations, 80 polyclinics, 101 antenatal clinics and offices, 52 medical centres, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology inpatient units, 11 independent maternity hospitals — 4 in Yerevan and 7 in marzes.

83. With a view to reducing the urban and rural differences in quality and affordability of medical aid, during the reporting period 11 major medical centres were put into operation in marzes under the programme for proportional development of marzes, namely in Hrazdan, Ijevan, Armavir, Gyumri, Ararat, Goris, Aparan, Gavar, Alaverdi, Kajaran and Noyemberyan.

New medical centres in Agarak, Vanadzor are being constructed.

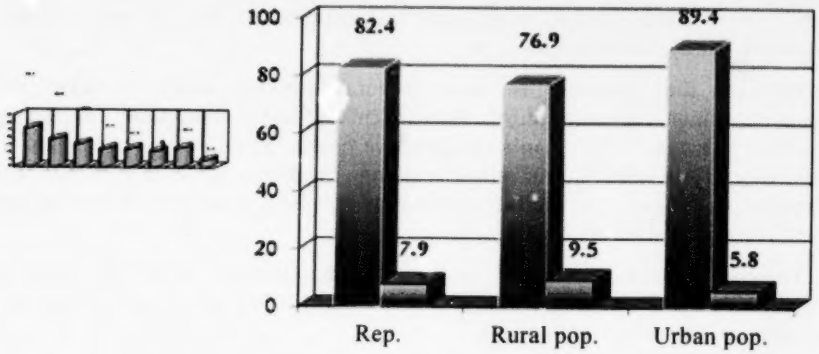
Approximately 30 rural health care centres and family doctor's offices have been repaired. Buildings in modernised medical institutions not only have undergone capital repairs, but they have also been equipped with modern medical devices, accessories and furniture, and a training for medical personnel has been conducted.

84. An obvious progress was also recorded in terms of improving the quality of 1-03 ambulance service, acquiring new ambulances, modernising the service, equipping with devices and replenishing with quality personnel.

85. With a view to improving the accessibility and affordability of the women's reproductive health services also feasible for women in rural and remote areas, the Obstetric Care State Certificate Programme has been introduced since 2008 which promotes the affordability and accessibility of free obstetric care services for women of all social groups, the reduction of childbirth official payments by ten times, which is reflected in the Report of Armenia on Demographic and Health Issues for 2010 (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1

Affordability of obstetric care services "before" and "after" the introduction of the Certificate (have paid for the birth of the child, %)



Source: *Armenian Demographic and Health Surveys, 2010, USAID.*
Note: the first column contains data on the frequency of state fees paid by the population before the introduction of the certificate, and the second column — after the introduction thereof.

86. The introduction of the Obstetric Care State Certificate Programme also fostered the improvement of descriptive indicators for obstetrics, in particular:

(1) increase in the early registration rate of pregnant women by 35%. Improvement of the screening process of pregnant women, increase of the HIV testing rate by 90% and more;

(2) the enrolment of pregnant women in examinations for syphilis, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis has increased, which comprised in recent years about 95%;

(3) reduction of the newborn mortality proportion in the structure of infant mortality by almost 10%;

(4) reduction of infant mortality rate for perinatal reasons by almost 1/3.

The 2010 Demographic and Health Surveys show that:

(1) the rate of pregnant women having made at least one prenatal care visit has increased by 6% as against that of 2005 and has reached 99%;

(2) and inpatient childbirth rate has reached 99.4%;

(3) 100% of pregnant women received obstetric care from qualified health care professional;

(4) 92% of women received postnatal care for 2 days following the childbirth;

(5) common ultrasound examinations continued to be conducted under state funding of obstetric care for the purpose of early detection of birth defects during pregnancy irrespective of the place of residence, which made it

possible to increase the indicator of detection of birth defects by 7% as compared to the recent years;

(6) besides, preventive programmes, particularly, for the prevention of induced termination of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as programmes for use of assisted reproductive technologies continued to be implemented;

(7) in 2011, within the framework of co-operation with the Republican Institute of Reproductive Health, Perinatology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the similarly-named institute in Moscow, the Assisted Reproductive Technologies Laboratory was established, which is the 4th one in the Republic;

(8) thanks to the use of assisted reproductive technologies, every year about 1000 infertile married couples overcome infertility and become pregnant.

87. The most important integral ratio reflecting maternal health condition is the maternal mortality ratio.

The comparison of the three-year average maternal mortality ratio shows that the maternal mortality rate in Armenia has continually decreased by more than 1/3. According to the official data of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, 15 cases of maternal mortality was recorded in 2008, 13 — in 2009, whereas 3 cases — in each 2010 and 2011 (6.8 per 100 000 live births).

In 2006-2008 the three-year average maternal mortality ratio amounted to 28,2 per 100 000 live births, and in 2010-2012 the same ratio amounted to 12,9, that is to say it was reduced by 2 times (Diagram 2).

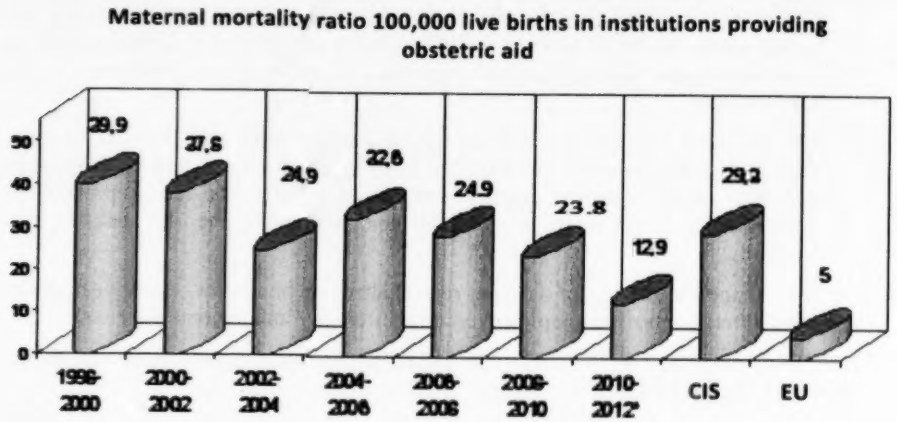
Significant changes have taken place in etiologic structure, the main reasons of maternal mortality are conditioned by severe pathologies incompatible with extragenital life.

The analysis of maternal mortality shows that it is high by nearly 30% among rural population, which obviously proves that reproductive health of women living in rural areas is more exposed to risk, as well as low level of affordability of obstetric care services provided to them. Poverty, which is higher in rural areas, can be the main one for the described problem among a number of multi-factor causes.

With regard to the cases of mortality due to abortion we would like to inform the following:

The data on cases of mortality, including those as a consequence of abortion, is collected from two sources: the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia collects them from the institutions providing obstetric care and the 2nd source is the National Statistic Service of the Republic of Armenia.

Diagram 2
The dynamics of maternal mortality



88. The number of women died of induced terminations of pregnancy is not only known but an analysis is made of all the cases, including those of women died of abortions /Table 1/.

Table 1
Number of women died of induced terminations of pregnancy by age groups, 2007-2012

People

	2007	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Under 15 years of age	–	–	–	–	–	–
15 to 19 years of age	–	–	–	–	–	–
20 to 34 years of age	–	2	–	–	–	–
35 to 49 years of age	–	–	1	–	–	–
Total	–	**2**	**1**	–	–	–

Due to the improvement of medical procedure of induced termination of pregnancy and introduction of a programme for medical termination of pregnancy in the Republic, significant changes have been made in recent years in the structure of maternal mortality in terms of prevention and reduction of cases of maternal death caused by induced termination of pregnancy and its complications.

89. *Situation of and trends in induced terminations of pregnancy*

According to the official statistics, as well as the data of the 2010 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey, no increase in the number of abortions was recorded in dynamics /Table 2 (a), (b) (c)/.

Table 2
Descriptive indicators on the induced abortions 2007-2011, RA NSS

Indicator	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Per 100 live births and stillbirths	28.3	29.8	30.5	26.9	27.4	29.8
Per 1 000 women of fertile age	12.4	13.5	15.0	13.5	13.5	15.8

90. The total abortion rate in Armenia is 0.8 per woman. This means that the average number of abortions among women in Armenia approximately corresponds to the half of the number of children per woman (Cumulative Birth Rate (CBR)=1.7). Age-specific abortion rate is highest among women aged 25-29, and these rates decrease among women of older age. According to the findings of 2010 ADHS, the GAR comprised 0.8, which is significantly lower than 1.8 and 2.6 indicators of the 2005 ADHS and the 2000 ADHS, that is, number of abortions has decreased about three times. The reason for such a difference can perhaps be explained by the fact that according to the 2010 survey data, first of all, the indicator of the use of contemporary contraceptive methods has increased among married women against 2000 and 2005 (it comprised 27 percent in 2010 as against the indicators of 22 per cent in 2000 and 20 per cent in 2005), moreover, the use of condoms among married women has doubled in the past ten years (comprised 15 per cent in 2010 as against the indicators of 8 per cent in 2005 and 7 per cent in 2000).

The decrease in GAR is probably mostly connected with the increased use of contemporary contraceptive methods.

31% of women surveyed has ever had an abortion; as against the 2005 and 2000 findings, the number of women who had an abortion decreased 2.5 times in 2010.

91. As regards the cases of pregnancy in adolescence, in 2008-2011 only 4 cases of pregnancy have been recorded among minors under 14 years of age, who have been subjected to induced termination of pregnancy for medical indications, except for 1 case in 2011.

Whereas among those aged 15 to 17, maximum up to 169 cases of pregnancy have been recorded, which normally resulted in childbirth, as those women had had a family and had been in early factual marital relations (Table 3).

Table 3
Pregnancies in adolescence

		15 to 18 years of age		
Year	*Total number of pregnancies in the Republic*	*Total number of pregnancies*	*Abortion*	*Childbirth*
2007	52 160	129	18	111
2008	54 245	141	17	124
2009	59 899	161	16	145
2010	59 326	111	16	95
2011	58 925	169	15	154
2012	57 496	149	14	163

92. In 2011 and 2012, Dr Christophe Guilmoto, representing the Institute of Research for Development of the Population and Development Centre in Paris, and national experts — on the initiative of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia and within the framework of co-operation with the United Nations Population Fund — conducted a research on the study of deep-rooted causes of sex ratio at birth (SRB), which enabled them to make anticipations with regard to the consequences of sex ratio for the country and develop prevention methods.

The analysis of the statistical data shows that the coefficient of boy/girl ratio in case of the first child has comprised 1.04-1.07, which corresponds to the biologically estimated average statistical indicators (1.02-1.06), starting from the second child the trend in the increase of the indicator is observed (1.08 – 1.13), however, the indicator is obviously high in case of the 3rd and 4th children where it has comprised 1.6 and 1.7.

The sex ratio equalises in 30-34 age group /Table 4/.

Table 4

Man/woman correlation by age groups

(Number of men per 100 women of the corresponding age group, annual average)

	0	*1-4*	*5-9*	*10-14*	*15-19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*50-54*	*55-59*	*60-64*	*65-69*	*70-74*	*75-79*	*80-84*	*85+*	*Total*
2010	114	114	116	112	105	103	102	98	94	91	89	88	84	78	72	68	66	52	32	94
2011	114	114	115	113	106	103	102	99	94	91	89	89	84	79	71	67	65	55	30	94

93. Trends in family planning and use of contraceptives

The 2010 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey collected data on the knowledge and use of contraceptive methods. According to the 2010 ADHS, over half of married women — 55 percent — have used any of the contraceptive methods at the time of the survey. Half of women using a contraceptive method give preference to traditional contraceptive methods (28 per cent), and the other half — to modern ones (27 per cent). The most frequently used method is withdrawal (25 per cent), followed by the male condom (15 per cent), and the Intrauterine Device (IUD) (10 per cent). The indicator of the use of contraceptive methods rises concurrently with age, peaking at 70 per cent among married women in 30-34 age group at the time of the survey, and then declining to 37 per cent among women in 45-49 age group.

94. The indicator of the overall use of contraceptive methods among married women does not essentially differ by urban and rural settlements (58 and 51 per cent respectively). However, urban women are more likely to use modern contraceptive methods than rural women (33 and 19 per cent respectively).

There is considerable differences in indicators of the use of contraceptive methods by marzes, where women are less likely to use modern contraceptive methods, and as women in Aragatsotn and Armavir marzes, they also, for the most part, rely on withdrawal.

95. As expected, the use of contraceptive methods, particularly modern ones, increases concurrently with educational attainment of women. Women, who have higher education, are twice as likely to use modern methods as women, who have

secondary or basic education (39 per cent as against 20-21 per cent). Generally, women in Armenia are not likely to use contraceptive methods before the birth of the first child.

Thus, as against the indicator of the use of contraceptive methods comprising 61 per cent in 2000, it decreased and comprised 53 per cent in 2005 and in 2010 it slightly increased comprising 55 per cent. However, as against 20 and 22 per cent of the two previous surveys, the indicator of the use of contemporary contraceptive means among married women has increased in 2010 and comprised 27 per cent. In particular, as it has already been mentioned, the proportion of those using condoms has increased among married women comprising 15 per cent in 2010 as compared to 7 per cent in 2000 and 8 per cent in 2005. The 2010 ADHS also recorded a trend in stable decrease in the use of traditional contraceptive methods (it comprised 28 per cent in 2010 as against 37 per cent in 2000 and 34 per cent in 2005), especially among those, who prefer withdrawal (it comprised 25 per cent in 2010 as against 32 per cent in 2000 and 28 per cent in 2005).

96. High level of knowledge of contraceptives among surveyed women is an important achievement:

(1) 100% of women had knowledge of at least one method;

(2) 27% per cent of married women use modern contraceptive methods and 28% — traditional ones;

(3) the indicator of the use of modern methods has increased as against 20% result recorded in 2005. This increase, for the most part, is conditioned by the prevalence of the use of condoms.

In recent years as well, 77 Family planning services of the Republic — within the framework of co-operation with the United Nations Population Fund — have been provided with modern contraceptives based on the demand made.

Women's morbidity and mortality

97. Women's morbidity and mortality of all groups of diseases (urogenital, oncologic, cardiovascular, infectious, etc.) is lower as against those of men nearly in all age groups.

Malignant neoplasms diagnosed for the first time by sex and age groups, 2007-2012

people

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Registered patients	women	211.6	211.0	222.2	219.9	231.6	248.9
	men	241.5	242.9	250.8	247.3	249.8	273.1

Morbidity by sexually transmitted diseases diagnosed for the first time by sex, 2007-2012

(per 100 000 population)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of patients diagnosed with syphilis	women	4.6	4.6	3.9	2.4	2.2	2.1
	men	5.1	4.6	4.7	3.6	3.3	3.9
Number of patients diagnosed with gonococcal infection (gonorrhoea)	women	11.0	8.9	8.2	4.8	4.1	6.4
	men	33.7	26.8	28.5	25.9	23.8	31.3

98. Taking into account the fact that the average life expectancy for women exceeds life expectancy for men by about seven years and the number of years among the elderly is notably high, the risk of poverty for single pensioner women and their health risks are more vivid.

Although the average life expectancy for women is, in fact, longer and their referral rate to medical institutions is higher (partially also due to the aforementioned factors), however, women (in particular among the elderly) are much more vulnerable in terms of chronicity of diseases and disability, as well as of the decline in "the quality of life", and the risk threshold is much higher.

HIV/AIDS

99. As of 1 January 2012, among 1153 HIV-infected persons registered in Armenia 340 are women (29.5%), 22 are children (1.9%), whereas among 138 AIDS patients 24 are women and 4 are children, and among the deceased 18 are women and 3 are children.

Although the aforementioned statistics seems to be favourable for women, however, it is worth mentioning that the majority of HIV-infected women are at the active reproductive age, are infected through heterosexual intercourse with their husbands, regular partners, and they are potential "future mothers" with a big perspective to create generations. The cause for infection of these women is indirectly conditioned by poverty and migration. The source of infection is considered to be husbands, particularly those who are migrant workers trying to earn their living in CIS countries.

Health care expenditures

100. Gender analysis of health care expenditures (in the context of financial proportionality of health care programmes for women and men) proves the obvious imbalance to the detriment of men.

Assessment of opportunities of achieving Millennium Development Goal 5

101. As regards Millennium Development Goal 5 "Improve maternal health", it can be stated that many of the goals set can be assessed as achievable on the basis of the current trends.

• Target 6. A Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	** Potentially achievable the maternal mortality ratio for Armenia was estimated at no more than 11,2 per 100000 live births in 2009-2011, it comprised 15,7 per 100000 live births in each 2010, 2011 — 6,8 per 1000000 live births
• Target 6.B Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	Achievable ✓ the rate of pregnant women made at least one prenatal care visit has increased by 6% as against 2005 and in 2010 it has reached 99%. ✓ 4 and more prenatal treatment and care visits comprised 93% ✓ inpatient childbirth rate has reached 99.4%. ✓ 100% of pregnant women received obstetric care services from qualified health care professionals.

102. There is no discrimination against women's employment in the health care sector either. Suffice to mention that according to statistics as of 1 January 2013, 8532 (66.1%) physicians out of 12922 working in the health care sector and 99,5% of paramedical workers (13855 out of 13919) are women. The number of women among managers of health care organisations has significantly increased: 350 (46,5%) of health care organisations out of 753 are led by women health care managers.

Article 13

103. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On state benefits" contains provisions aimed at maternity protection. This refers to family benefits, lump-sum benefits for childcare and childbirth. The state policy in this sector was presented in the previous Periodic Report. With certain changes (in terms of both financial costs of programmes and policy) it is still being implemented. Thus, the amount of family benefit, which is differentiated based on a place of residence of the family, family points and the number of children living in the family, has increased by about 50% as compared to 2007, and a childcare lump-sum benefit has increased 6 times. As regards childbirth lump-sum benefit, here the following approaches are displayed: if in 2007-2009 the large amount provided for the birth of the third child and for each next child in the family was granted only to those registered in the Family Benefit System, starting from 2009 the large amount of lump-sum benefit for the birth of the third child and for each next child in the family has been granted to all children, provided that these requirements are complied with. In 2013, the parent receives AMD 50 000 for the birth of the first and second child, and AMD 430 000 for the birth of the third child and each new-born child.

104. The amount of the lump-sum benefit for the birth of three or more children is envisaged to increase from 1 January 2014: in particular, the amount of the benefit for the birth of the third and fourth child will comprise an estimated AMD 500 000. Family capital of an estimated AMD 500 000 will be added thereto, which will be

provided to a child upon his or her attainment the age of 18. The family capital, added to the lump-sum benefit of an estimated AMD 500 000, will comprise AMD 1 000 000 starting from the birth of the fifth child.

105. Social cases, which are based on comprehensive assessment of family (person) needs and with the aim of undertaking of relevant measures for satisfying these needs, are administered in 19 territorial centres for complex social services, which have been operated within the framework of the pilot programme for integrated social services approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 952-N of 26 July 2012. The activities of the pilot programme are currently under way.

106. Women enjoy the right to receive bank loans, mortgage loans and other financial credits under the same conditions as men.

107. The current agenda of the development policy implies guaranteeing of wide participation of the society to the extent possible in ensuring economic growth based on their education, professional competence, age and sex. In this respect, an importance is attached to ensuring necessary grounds for inclusive growth in terms of social and economic long-term development. It should be noted that the participation of women in the economy has dynamically increased in recent years, which also creates necessary guarantees and sustainable grounds for reducing poverty, income and consumption gap between the men and women in the society.

Thus, for example, pursuant to the National Official Statistics, the difference between the poverty rates by sex is not significant. In 2011, in case of 35% of poverty rates among population, poverty rates of men and women comprised 34.5% and 35.5%, respectively, whereas the proportion of women among the poor population is lower by 8 percentage point from that of men. If the gap between an average monthly monetary income per men and women was approximately twice as large in 2009, it was already 1.7 times in 2011. A dynamic progress is made in the field of employment as well. In 2011, despite the reduction in the overall number of employed persons as compared to the previous year, the number of employed women increased by 23 800 people with regard to almost all types of economic activities.

The mentioned indicators testify that the policy measures encouraging the participation of women in the economy have already started to produce positive outcomes. Widening of participation and employment opportunities for women is especially encouraged through various business development tools and mechanisms. The economic policy aimed at guaranteeing the right to equally enjoy available opportunities is reflected in the directions of the Policy Strategic Programme of the Republic of Armenia for 2011-2015 and in its annual Action Plan, as well as in the annual Programmes of State Aid to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) within the framework of financing from the State Budget.

With a view to enhancing women's entrepreneurial capacity and increasing the accessibility of financial resources, programmes are being implemented within the scope of the partnership with international donor organisations. In particular, the SME DNC of Armenia is currently implementing "Women's Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development" Loan and Technical Assistance Programmes with the support of the Asian Development Bank. Under these programmes, activities are being carried out for the training of start-up women entrepreneurs, campaigns for

raising awareness of the resources for business development services, the establishment and development of the institute of business mentors for women entrepreneurs, including at the regional level. Ensuring the access to and availability of funds is also an important direction aimed at increasing the proportion of women as beneficiaries for credit guarantees provided and other financial assistance instruments. Within the scope of the programme, access to credits in local currency will be ensured for at least 50 percent women-led enterprises in co-operation with the partner institutions in the financial market.

108. The state policy developed and implemented in the Republic of Armenia in sport and youth sectors is aimed at fulfilling the main tasks of the State enshrined in Article 48 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia in the mentioned sectors. In particular, the participation of the youth in the political, economic and cultural life of the country, employment and social and economic issues of the youth, promotion of healthy lifestyle among the youth, development of spiritual and cultural values of the youth and their patriotic upbringing, continuation of education and awareness on informal education are emphasised both in the "The State Youth Policy Concept Paper" approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 798 of 14 December 1998, and in "The Republic of Armenia Strategy for the State Youth Policy and its Action Plan for the period covering 2013-2017" approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 1693-N of 27 December 2012, and numerous events are implemented and provided for in the aforementioned directions.

109. "Affordable Housing to Young Families" State Target Programme (hereinafter referred to as "the Programme") developed by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 98-N of 29 January 2010, has been implemented since 2011, the aim of which is to provide state aid to young families in need of improving their apartment conditions.

The Programme envisages provision of state aid to young families in acquiring apartments through mortgage loans with interest rates lower than those available on the market (8.5-9% in the city of Yerevan, and 6.5-7% in marzes).

Within the framework of the Programme, banks and credit organisations provide credits to young families for acquiring apartments, and the State provides financial assistance to the borrower in the process of repayment of the credit.

The financial assistance of the State is reflected by direct and indirect partial subsidisation of interests. In total, the state aid to a young family comprises over 4 percentage points.

110. Equal opportunities are ensured for women in the sector of culture to demonstrate their creative potential and use their skills.

The activities of cultural establishments and organisations are targeted at providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men to freely participate in cultural life, enjoy the fruits of their creation, get closer to cultural values.

The sector of culture in the Gender Policy Implementation Strategy is covered by measures stemming from the Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015, points of the Gender Policy Concept Paper, relevant provisions

of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men".

The statistical information on vulnerable groups, in particular, the poverty rates by sex and age groups, the information on the economy, employment, unemployment, as well as the description of the employed by employment, nature of job, etc. are provided in the Annex attached to the Report.

Article 14

111. In 2012, 57.1% of the overall employed women in the Republic work in the sector of agriculture.

Pursuant to data of 2012, households led by women in rural settlements comprise over 26%, and those led by men — 74%.

*) Source: NSS; Women and Men, 2013.

112. In the Republic, the Programme on subsiding interest rates of credits provided to the agricultural sector has been implemented since 2011, pursuant to the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No 349-N of 31 March 2011. In total, starting from 1 April 2011, an estimated 53.8 thousand credits with a total amount of AMD 44.1 billion have been provided as of 30 June 2013. 15% of the mentioned amount has been provided to women.

The provision of preferential credits will boost entrepreneurial activities of women, creation of new jobs, increase in incomes, reduction of poverty, and eventually bring to a higher level of activity and to improvement of life conditions of rural women.

113. Within the framework of the "Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness" credit project implemented with the support of the World Bank, "Community Pasture User Association" consumer co-operatives have been established in 67 communities of six marzes of the Republic of Armenia (Aragatsotn, Lori, Shirak, Tavush, Gegharkunik and Syunik). 6674 people are members of the mentioned co-operatives, 1568 of which are women. 104 women are members of boards of co-operatives. Training courses on rights and duties of members of co-operatives, drawing up of the budget of co-operatives, pasture use, prevention of negative impact on environment, fight against degradation, pasture improvement, as well as on the relevant legislative framework and other topics have been conducted for women members of co-operatives.

The mentioned measure will promote creation of additional jobs for women, improvement of their working conditions, raising of awareness in organisation of joint activities pursuant to principles of co-operatives, increase in the volume of livestock production, growth of incomes of women.

Within the framework of the mentioned credit project, 24 competitive grant programmes have been implemented, three of which — under the supervision of women. Women have had an active participation in other programmes. The programmes implemented under the supervision of women are the following:

(1) "Increase in the production of breeds, meat, milk and wool through the application of new optimal production technology in Armenian semi-coarse wool breed of sheep and through their full feeding" (Dalarik Community,

Armavir Marz of the Republic of Armenia, a female farmer group comprised of five members);

(2) "Construction of double-layer polyethylene greenhouse and organisation of cultivation of strawberries in Vayots Dzor Marz of the Republic of Armenia" (Aghavnadzor Community, Vayots Dzor Marz of the Republic of Armenia, a farmer group comprised of five members, three of which are women);

(3) "Organisation, introduction and preservation with a new technology (deep freezing) of a new type of cultivation of non-traditional types of vegetables (Kohlrabi, Broccoli, Brussels sprout) under conditions of Gargar Community in Lori Marz" (Gargar Community, Lori Marz of the Republic of Armenia, a farmer group comprised of five members, four of which are women).

Five seminars have been organised within the framework of the above-mentioned programmes for the purpose of sharing knowledge on technologies. During the seminars 250 leaflets have been printed and distributed to farmers, three field days have been held and three TV programmes have been broadcast.

The mentioned works will promote the introduction of new technologies, increase in efficiency of production and the sharing of advanced practice.

114. In 2014, the "Female Food Hero" award was held for the fourth time. The award was aimed at presenting to the public those women who produce daily food and promote local production. During the award, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia and Agricultural Alliance handed over prizes and presents to women from all marzes for their active participation and notable success in the sector of agriculture.

Article 15

115. The provisions of the mentioned Article were detailed in the previous Report of the Republic of Armenia. The principles of the right to equality before the law and equal protection by law have been enshrined in Articles 14.1, 19, 20, 25 and 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

The principles of right to judicial protection and equality before the law and the court are also reflected in the Judicial Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted on 21 February 2007, Article 7 of which states, "Everyone shall be entitled to judicial protection of his or her rights and freedoms.

No one may be deprived of the right to have his or her case publicly examined by a competent, independent and impartial court within a reasonable time period, under equal conditions and with observance of all requirements of fairness.

Everyone shall have the right to exercise his or her right to judicial protection either through his or her representative or counsel, or personally".

Pursuant to Article 15 of the same Code, everyone shall be equal before the law and the court.

1. Discrimination in rights, freedoms, and duties based of sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, ideology, political or other views, membership to a national minority,

property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited.

2. The principle of equality of everyone before the law in the relations with administrative bodies has been reflected in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On fundamentals of administrative action and administrative proceedings" adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 18 February 2004, Article 7 of which states, "Administrative bodies shall be prohibited from displaying unequal approach towards similar factual circumstances, unless there is any ground for their differentiation".

3. Another expression of the principle of equality of everyone before the law shall be the constitutional norm according to which everyone has the right to receive — on grounds and in the manner prescribed by law — the assistance of the Human Rights Defender for the protection of his or her rights and freedoms. In the light of this constitutional norm, Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Human Rights Defender" prescribes that any natural person may apply to the Defender irrespective of nationality, citizenship, place of residence, sex, race, age, political and other views or active legal capacity.

Equal civil rights are also prescribed by Article 20 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia.

116. Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia prescribes the right to free movement. "Everyone lawfully staying within the Republic of Armenia shall have the right to move freely and choose a place of residence within the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

Everyone shall have the right to leave the Republic of Armenia.

Every citizen and everyone enjoying the right to reside in the Republic of Armenia shall have the right to return to the Republic of Armenia".

Article 16

117. As regards the aforementioned Article, we would like to inform that the previous Report of the Republic of Armenia set out in detail that marriage and family relationships are regulated by the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 9 November 2004. Both the confirmation of marriage and the procedure for divorce (in bodies exercising state registration of civil status acts, through a judicial procedure), the alimony obligations of family members were mentioned.

We also consider it necessary to add that Article 122 of the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia prescribes the written consent of the other spouse as a requirement for adoption in case a child is to be adopted by one of the spouses. However, the Code also envisages cases when the consent of the other spouse is not required, in particular, if spouses have ceased their marital relations, live separately for more than a year, and the place of residence of the other spouse is unknown.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On civil status acts" adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 19 April 2005 states, "During the state

registration of marriage the surname (a joint surname or keeping of a premarital surname) of spouses shall, at their wish, be filled in a marriage record.

Where spouses have chosen a joint surname, it may be filled in with a surname of either of the spouses or with such a surname which comprises simultaneously the surname of the wife and the husband. A joint surname may not comprise more than two surnames, and it is written hyphenated".

In case of divorce, the mutual consent of spouses with regard to divorce must be confirmed in the joint application for divorce, and surnames which are chosen after the divorce by each of the spouses must also be indicated therein.

The name of the child in the birth record must be registered at the consent of parents, and the surname must be the surnames of his or her parents. In case of different surnames of parents, the surname of the child is that of his or her father or mother by the consent of parents.

118. As regards points 14-15 of the Concluding observations of the Committee, it must be stated that the draft Law "On making an amendment to the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia" and the draft Law "On making supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On civil status acts"" were adopted in 2013, pursuant to which the difference of age between women and men when concluding marriage has been removed, and minimum age for marriage has been set at the age of 18.